



JERRY TEKONT, Chairman
NICK WEAVER, Vice Chairman
Secretary-Treasurer
SUSAN L. PROCTOR, D.C., President

February 22, 2000

Mr. Les Johnson
Director, Food Distribution Division
Food and Nutrition Services
U.S. Department of Agriculture
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

Dear Mr. Johnson:

The National Turkey Federation (NTF) is working hard to stay informed on the progression of the business process reengineering of the donated school foodservice program. Contrary to claims that the process included all stakeholders, we believe that USDA has not sought input from our industry nor, we believe, from the agriculture community in general.

We appreciated your willingness to meet with us to explain the process but believe this effort has been after the fact rather than providing an opportunity to participate in the reengineering process.

For instance, there are many school district pilot programs being initiated across the country. There has been no public notice of these pilots or any industry input into the design and implementation of the projects. More importantly, we have not been notified about how the department will solicit and evaluate public opinion concerning the success or failure of each individual pilot. To properly assess the viability of each pilot program it is important for all stakeholders to be included in the process.

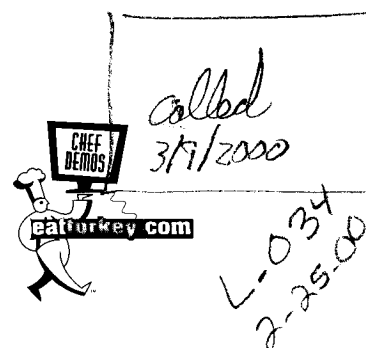
We request a list summarizing all pilot programs that involve turkey and turkey products. Please indicate in the summary the completion dates for the pilots and how we can participate in and comment during the evaluation process.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherrie".

Sherrie L. Rosenblatt
Director of Public Relations





JERRY TROMP, Chairman
NICK WEAVER, Vice Chairman
Secretary-Treasurer
STUART E. PROCTOR, JR., President

CONTROL NO: MRP-00-22
ORIGINAL TO: AMS
DATE: 3/7/00

March 2, 2000

The Honorable Mike Dunn
Undersecretary
Marketing & Inspection Programs
U.S. Department of Agriculture
14th & Independence Ave.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Mr. Dunn:

For the last year, the National Turkey Federation (NTF) has been following the progression of the Business Process Reengineering program for donated food to the school foodservice program. Prior to that the Federation has had a long history of involvement with helping the turkey industry remain competitive in selling product to the USDA school lunch program, as well as identifying further processed products that would be less labor intensive for school districts. The commodity program has served our industry well over the decades and we want it to serve school districts well too.

We are eager to work with the department to make improvements to the school lunch purchasing program. However, we are concerned to hear that the department is still considering making poultry products 100 percent substitutable and to see the related lack of controls that accompany that concept.

We are worried that if USDA were to make poultry products completely substitutable the effectiveness of the program to support agriculture would be weakened. Manufacturers would not be required to produce foods under the supervision of USDA graders nor would they be prohibited from substituting imported food product. Because of the eliminating of these controls there is an opportunity for fraud and abuse that will eventually erode the effectiveness of the program and the support it receives from agriculture and the general public.

It is also our understanding that school districts are discontent with the program because of the lack of notification of products being delivered and the inability to order desired products for specific delivery times. This would allow school districts to determine how much of a given donated food USDA will purchase on behalf of the schools. To be beneficial this change would need to continue to support agriculture at the same level, while finding other outlets for unwanted foods.

We urge the department to get broad input before implementing changes to the school foodservice distribution program. Because many of these recommendations are controversial they deserve full public discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sherrie Rosenblatt".

Sherrie Rosenblatt
Director of Public Relations

cc: Shirley Watkins

